Session V – Large Lakes, Deltas, and Transboundary Partnerships: Fostering Science, Cooperation, and Sound Management
2:30 PM

Wetlands and State of Fisheries in the Russian River Deltas

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Abstract

The wetlands in Russian river deltas (the rivers Volga, Don, Lena, etc.) cover huge territories. These wetlands serve as spawning grounds and nurseries for a number of fish species, including sturgeons, salmonids, cyprinids. Also the deltaic wetlands play an extremely important role for commercial and game fisheries. Historical analysis of trends in the development fisheries in the Russian river deltas helps to explain the recent state of this activity and to forecast its evolution in future. Despite dramatic political, social and economical changes, the fisheries in Russian river deltas preserve its importance. The main problems that fisheries face now are destruction of natural habitats, spawning grounds and routes for migrations of anadromous species, overfishing, poaching, toxic pollution, eutrophication, changes in general deltaic processes due to regulation of river flows, and associated decrease in flux of suspended matter. Global climate change is a new challenge for deltaic wetlands and hence for the fisheries in Russian river delta regions. There is currently no consensus on what the overall direct and indirect impacts of climate change on the number of Russian wetlands will be. We believe that in modern Russian conditions the most urgent issue is the development of proper practices for management of deltaic wetlands and preserving their biodiversity. For effective plans data and information on wetland status, development trends, and characteristics are required that are not currently available.